

TRANSFER OF STEFFENS FAMILY PROPERTY IN WYOMING

JULY 12, 1999.—Referred to the Private Calendar and ordered to be printed

Mr. YOUNG of Alaska, from the Committee on Resources,
submitted the following

REPORT

[To accompany S. 449]

[Including cost estimate of the Congressional Budget Office]

The Committee on Resources, to whom was referred the bill (S. 449) to direct the Secretary of the Interior to transfer to the personal representative of the estate of Fred Steffens of Big Horn County, Wyoming, certain land comprising the Steffens family property, having considered the same, report favorably thereon without amendment and recommend that the bill do pass.

PURPOSE OF THE BILL

The purpose of S. 449 is to direct the Secretary of the Interior to transfer to the personal representative of the estate of Fred Steffens of Big Horn County, Wyoming, certain land comprising the Steffens family property.

BACKGROUND AND NEED FOR LEGISLATION

The property outlined in S. 449 (about 80 acres) has been a part of the Steffens' family working farm since the land was purchased in 1928. Mr. Steffens was issued a warranty deed to the property by Mr. Frank McKinney. Apparently, however, Mr. McKinney had neither title to the property nor an assignable right of entry. In good faith, Mr. Steffens purchased the property and, according to the Big Horn County Assessor's office, paid taxes on it since the date of purchase.

Upon Mr. Steffens' death, in an attempt to settle his estate, it was discovered that a patent had never been issued for these lands. Mr. Steffens' sister and representative of the estate filed a Color of Title application with the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) Wyoming office, but the title was rejected because the lands at

issue were, and continue to be, withdrawn by the Bureau of Reclamation for the Shoshone Reclamation Project. Regulations specifically preclude claims under the Color of Title Act when lands are withdrawn for federal purposes.

The only option to remedy this situation is to pass S. 449. The bill transfers the title and surface estate to the Steffens. BLM will keep the mineral rights.

COMMITTEE ACTION

S. 449 was introduced by Senator Craig Thomas (R-WY) on February 24, 1999. The bill was referred to the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources which reported the bill favorably without amendment on March 22, 1999 (S. Report 106-32). The Senate passed the bill by unanimous consent without amendment on April 19, 1999.

S. 449 was referred to the Committee on Resources on June 17, 1999. The Committee ordered the bill favorably reported without amendment on June 30, 1999, by voice vote.

S. 449 is identical to H.R. 509, introduced by Congresswoman Barbara Cubin (R-WY). H.R. 509 was referred to the Committee on Resources, which reported the bill favorably with a technical amendment on March 3, 1999, by voice vote (H. Report 106-67). The House of Representatives passed H.R. 509 on May 4, 1999, by voice vote.

COMMITTEE OVERSIGHT FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Regarding clause 2(b)(1) of rule X and clause 3(c)(1) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the Committee on Resources' oversight findings and recommendations are reflected in the body of this report.

CONSTITUTIONAL AUTHORITY STATEMENT

Article I, section 8 and Article IV, section 3 of the Constitution of the United States grant Congress the authority to enact this bill.

COMPLIANCE WITH HOUSE RULE XIII

1. Cost of Legislation.—Clause 3(d)(2) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives requires an estimate and a comparison by the Committee of the costs which would be incurred in carrying out this bill. However, clause 3(d)(3)(B) of that Rule provides that this requirement does not apply when the Committee has included in its report a timely submitted cost estimate of the bill prepared by the Director of the Congressional Budget Office under section 402 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974.

2. Congressional Budget Act.—As required by clause 3(c)(2) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives and section 308(a) of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974, this bill does not contain any new budget authority, spending authority, credit authority, or an increase or decrease in revenues or tax expenditures.

3. Government Reform Oversight Findings.—Under clause 3(c)(4) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the Committee has received no report of oversight findings and rec-

ommendations from the Committee on Government Reform on this bill.

4. Congressional Budget Office Cost Estimate.—Under clause 3(c)(3) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives and section 403 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974, the Committee has received the following cost estimate for this bill from the Director of the Congressional Budget Office:

U.S. CONGRESS,
CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE,
Washington, DC, July 2, 1999.

Hon. DON YOUNG,
*Chairman, Committee on Resources,
U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, DC.*

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: The Congressional Budget Office has prepared the enclosed cost estimate for S. 449, an act to direct the Secretary of the Interior to transfer to the personal representative of the estate of Fred Steffens of Big Horn County, Wyoming, certain land comprising the Steffens family property.

If you wish further details on this estimate, we will be pleased to provide them. The CBO staff contact is Victoria Heid Hall.

Sincerely,

BARRY B. ANDERSON
(For Dan L. Crippen, Director).

Enclosure.

S. 449.—An act to direct the Secretary of the Interior to transfer to the personal representative of the estate of Fred Steffens of Big Horn County, Wyoming, certain land comprising the Steffens family property

S. 449 would direct the Secretary of the Interior, acting through the Bureau of Land Management, to transfer without consideration about 80 acres of land in Big Horn County, Wyoming, to the representative of the estate of Mr. Fred Steffens. The federal government would retain the mineral interests in the land.

CBO estimates that enacting this legislation would have no significant impact on the federal budget. Because S. 449 would not affect direct spending or receipts, pay-as-you-go procedures would not apply. S. 449 contains no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in the Unfunded Mandate Reform Act and would have no significant impact on the budgets of state, local or tribal governments.

On March 10, 1999, CBO prepared a cost estimate for S. 449 as ordered reported by the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources on March 4, 1999. The two versions of S. 449 are identical, as are the two cost estimates.

The CBO staff contact for this estimate is Victoria Heid Hall. This estimate was approved by Robert A. Sunshine, Deputy Assistant Director for Budget Analysis.

COMPLIANCE WITH PUBLIC LAW 104-4

This bill contains no unfunded mandates.

PREEMPTION OF STATE, LOCAL OR TRIBAL LAW

This bill does not intend to preempt State, local or tribal law.

CHANGES IN EXISTING LAW

If enacted, this bill would make no changes in existing law.

